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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [ELECTIONS](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: ANPP PRIMARY: BUHARI WINS BY CONSENSUS

REF: A. ABUJA 3227

[1B](#). ABUJA 3216

[1C](#). ABUJA 3186

[1D](#). ABUJA 3182

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES THOMAS FUREY FOR REASONS 1.4 B & D

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY: At the December 18 All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP) Convention, General Muhammadu Buhari secured the Presidential nomination after all other candidates successively conceded. Throngs of Buhari supporters surrounded Eagle Square and cheered on as his motorcade approached, highlighting his immense, unmatched popularity. END SUMMARY.

[12](#). (C) At the December 18 All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP) Convention, General Muhammadu Buhari secured the Presidential nomination following two days of intense negotiations among the candidates. The Northern Elders Forum and various other parties exerted pressure on the candidates to ensure that the ANPP nominated its strongest candidate to challenge the PDP's nominee, Umaru Yar'Adua.

[13](#). (C) Buhari arrived escorted by more than one thousand of his supporters on the streets surrounding Eagle Square. His reception among the delegates was also impressive as the delegates cheered on his motorcade circuit of the venue. As the time approached for voting, the other candidates, one-by-one, conceded to Buhari. After front-runner Zamfara State Governor Alhaji Sani Ahmed Yerima's announcement to step down, the audience erupted in pandemonium, taking more than 15 minutes to restore calm. Then, defunct National Republican Convention (NRC) candidate, Uthman Bashir Tofa, conceded followed by Former Minister of Education Mallam Dauda Birma, Chief Harry Akande, and Borno Governor Madu Ali Sharif.

[14](#). (C) Yobe Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim told the ANPP executive that he was frightened to concede. "Obasanjo told me he would send the EFCC (the corruption police) after me if I step down," he pleaded. Other Northern politicians pointed out to him that if he refused to budge, he faced the potentially more dangerous "wrath of his own people." The lone holdout was Pere Ajuwa, who finally, just as voting was to commence, conceded.

[15](#). (U) In his brief acceptance speech, Buhari welcomed alliances with other political parties, underscored the need for "free and fair elections" in 2007, and chided INEC for pushing for electronic voter registration machines "when there is no electricity in the country". Unlike the December

16-17 PDP Convention, which closed on a disappointed note the morning after it began, the ANPP Convention concluded jubilantly fewer than six hours after it commenced.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: General Buhari's selection by consensus as the ANPP candidate clearly shows his popularity and Party confidence in his capacity to galvanize the ANPP in hopes of countering the PDP. However, the outcome was anything but certain since Yerima was looking after the interests of Vice President Atiku Abubakar and Ibrahim was acting out the instructions of President Obasanjo.

¶7. (C) COMMENT, CONT'D: Just as many believe he did in 2003, Buhari can likely muster the votes to win in 2007 - especially against the obscure Yar'Adua. While we await Buhari's selection of a running mate, it is clear that he needs a strong, visible, and widely acceptable candidate from the southern part of the country to ensure enough support not only to win the election, but also to defend the ballots come election day. END COMMENT.

FUREY